



Central Intelligence Agency
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

29 September 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Attached is the survey of the current terrorist threat situation against the United States that you requested. As you know, most of the threat reporting we receive and evaluate daily tends to be vague, often inconsistent, and the product of sources of undetermined reliability. Consequently, though we have tried to capture with some specificity all the threats that appear to have any credibility, some will no doubt turn out to be false alarms. And, because of the nature of terrorist tactics, there is no doubt we have missed some or simply lack enough data to anticipate them.

Robert M. Gates

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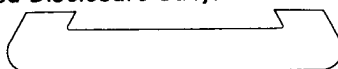


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DISSEMINATION CONTROL ABBREVIATIONS

NOFORN-	Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals
NOCONTRACT-	Not Releasable to Contractors or Contractor/Consultants
PROPIN-	Caution-Proprietary Information Involved
USIBONLY-	USIB Departments Only
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29 September 1984

MEMORANDUM

**Prospects for Increased Terrorism Against the United States
in the Wake of the Latest Bombing in Beirut****Indications of Heightened Threat**

We believe several serious incidents of anti-American terrorism could easily occur over the next several months.

- o By all indications, the bombing of the US Embassy Annex in Beirut on 20 September 1984 is not part of a new or coordinated wave of terrorism against the United States. Nevertheless, a number of credible reports from a variety of sources indicate that terrorist groups--particularly in Lebanon--with established capabilities are contemplating specific actions against US citizens and facilities.
- o The latest spectacular suicide bombing against the United States in Beirut by the so-called Islamic Jihad signals Iran's continuing willingness to use terrorism to force the United States out of Lebanon and serves as a powerful example to terrorists elsewhere.
- o The Presidential election campaign in the United States offers an inviting opportunity for terrorist groups to showcase their grievances and thereby hopefully influence the candidate campaigns and perhaps even voting results, as Iran attempted to do through the hostage crisis four years ago. [REDACTED]

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The principal threat continues to come from the Middle East, where Iran, working through and with various fundamentalist Shiite terrorist groups, is undertaking a concerted program of terror to drive the US out of Lebanon. Over the next several months, Iranian-connected groups are likely to launch additional attacks against Americans in Lebanon, and possibly in other Middle Eastern States. The most likely targets will be diplomatic and military personnel and their official facilities and residences with terrorists choosing among those that appear most vulnerable. [REDACTED]

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Though we cannot rule out Iranian-inspired attacks outside the Middle East, anti-American terrorism in other regions is more likely to be stimulated largely by local or regional issues. In Latin America, Americans will be most vulnerable in El Salvador and Colombia. In Europe, attacks most likely would come from radical leftist groups in France, Greece, Italy, or Turkey. By and large, the threat of terrorist attacks--with some notable exceptions--is lowest in Asia and Africa. [REDACTED]

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Middle East

The Middle East has the greatest potential for high-casualty terrorist attacks. Well armed and organized terrorist groups proliferate throughout the region. These groups benefit from extensive regional support networks among the indigenous populations as well as help and instigation from collaborating states like Iran, Syria, and Libya. Perhaps most importantly, they have amply demonstrated the will and ability to attack US persons and facilities at their general discretion [REDACTED]

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Any American or American facility should be regarded at high risk in Lebanon, particularly in Beirut. At present both explicit and implicit threats abound, with the sorting out process impeding US ability to provide security for our personnel in the region. The bulk of those threats considered most serious are tied to the activities of Iranian-connected groups--operating under the nom de guerre of Islamic Jihad--who are

supported by Palestinian groups like PFLP-GC or the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

- o Our analysis [redacted] suggests that the Hizballah are planning to stage a follow-up attack to the bombing of the American Embassy Annex. The French Embassy is the most likely target, but US diplomatic facilities and personnel remaining in Beirut are also candidates. 25X1 25X1
- o Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, a radical Shia leader, has claimed [redacted] that the next targets in Beirut will be the Porfin Building housing our Embassy chancery, the British Embassy Annex, various West German facilities, and the Swiss Ambassador. US Embassy security officers have observed individuals surveilling the Porfin Building over the past week, and have identified one as an employee of the Iranian Embassy. 25X1
- o US officers in the UN observer group were threatened by an anonymous phone call on 29 September.
- o A variety of reports [redacted] suggest that the major Shia terrorist groups and possibly the PFLP-GC are involved in intensive guerrilla training as well as specific planning for attacks against US persons and facilities in Beirut. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

Though the threats in Lebanon are too numerous and often too vague to cataloge, most signal either bombings or armed attacks. Based on our knowledge of the groups involved, we believe kidnappings for the purpose of gaining additional hostages like Buckley are also possible. [redacted] 25X1

With a few additions, the same countries and groups causing the most trouble in Lebanon also appear to be at work elsewhere in the Middle East.

- o In **Kuwait**, local security remains insufficient to eliminate the terrorist threat. Two Iranian-backed plots against non-US targets have been aborted since May, but Kuwait probably remains a prime target. Dawa Party members convicted for the December bombings remain in jail in Kuwait, and US interests could be targets of any Iranian attempt to secure their release through extortion. The location of the US Embassy in Kuwait makes it very vulnerable to attack, according to observers on the scene.

- o Iran is continuing its efforts to infiltrate trained Bahraini Shias back into **Bahrain**. An Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain infiltrator arrested on 16 August admitted a US-owned oil refinery was one of his targets. The US Navy facility received an anonymous threat from Islamic Jihad early last summer.
- o While government security is extensive inside **Iraq**, there have been several Dawa attacks against British and French targets during the past year. [redacted] Iranian-backed terrorists may be initiating a campaign against Western interests in Baghdad.
- o There is no evidence of a near term threat to US interests in the **UAE** but local security is poor and the US Embassy is highly vulnerable.
- o In **Saudi Arabia**, the government improved its security measures substantially prior to the recently concluded Hajj. We believe an attack on Americans is less likely than in other Gulf states, but Israeli intelligence reports that Iran may have infiltrated subversives into Saudi Arabia under cover of the pilgrimage.
- o In **Jordan**, Syria has been using both the Abu Nidal Group (Black June) and the Jordanian Revolutionary People's Party to dissuade King Hussein from negotiating with Israel or supporting Arafat. Last summer, the group attempted to place bombs at US diplomatic facilities. The recent Jordanian resumption of diplomatic relations with Egypt may provoke more terrorist attacks in Jordan, possibly against US targets. The Abu Nidal group has demonstrated its capability to conduct assassinations throughout the world, and its overseas cells could be turned against the United States. In July, a number of US Embassies and other facilities in the Middle East received threats from the Arab Revolutionary Brigades, a cover name previously used by Abu Nidal. The US Embassy, for its part, is located on a main road, and would be vulnerable to Beirut-style suicide attacks.

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- o Earlier this year, the Iraqi-based 15 May Organization attempted to place bombs on flights between **Israel** and Europe. Though Iraq--following US objections--forced a halt to the exercise, we are not confident that the activity will not resume. [redacted]

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Latin America

Terrorism in Latin America usually occurs in the context of leftist guerrilla insurgencies whose members see the United States as the major supporter and manipulator of the governments they seek to overthrow. The most serious danger is in **Colombia**, where strong US support for the government's actions against narcotics traffickers and subversives makes US officials and facilities compelling targets. The most virulently anti-US group is the Ricardo Franco Front, which claimed responsibility for a series of bombings in Bogota on 23 May 1984 directed primarily against offices of the US Government and American businesses such as ITT and Texaco. A steady stream of reports about terrorist plans to kidnap or kill the Ambassador or other Embassy personnel, usually involving the Ricardo Franco Front, factions of the 19th of April Movement (M-19), or the National Liberation Army, were persuasive enough to compel the Ambassador's return to the US for consultations in late August. [REDACTED]

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Despite relatively few attacks against the United States over the past 10 years, **El Salvador** is another area of immediate concern. Leftist Salvadoran guerrillas belonging to the Clara Elizabeth Ramirez Front have been surveilling Embassy personnel, especially Marine Security Guards. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the guerrillas also intend to launch a terrorist offensive in Bogota soon. The guerrillas most likely would target US military advisers and Embassy personnel--as was done in the May 1983 assassination of US Navy Lieutenant Commander Schaufleberger--and "institutions controlled by the US Embassy". [REDACTED] some Salvadoran terrorists have discussed the Beirut bombing, and may be planning a similar operation; another report indicates the targeting of Embassy personnel who jog. [REDACTED]

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Threats elsewhere in Latin America, while possibly more potential than real at present, also merit attention.

- o Based on captured documents and interrogations of **Ecuador's** Alfaro Vive Carajo (AVC) personnel, AVC plans to follow up its May 1984 Embassy bombing with further attacks including a second bombing.
- o **Chile** is experiencing a rising tempo of bombings that has included US businesses as incidental targets.
- o A **Costa Rican** group, La Familia, was surveilling Embassy personnel last January, but most members of the group were jailed this year.
- o The Revolutionary Armed Forces, a **Guatemalan** group responsible for anti-American attacks in 1983, may be planning soon to engage in urban terrorism--an effort which US Embassy". According to a recent report some Salvadoran terrorists have discussed the Beirut bombing and may be planning a similar operation; another report indicates the targeting of Embassy personnel who jog.
- o The Ambassador's residence in **Bolivia** was bombed on 4 March 1984 by elements associated with drug traffickers. [REDACTED] 25X1
[REDACTED] 25X1
- o Rightist frustration in **Argentina** prompted threats against US installations during President Alfonsin's just concluded visit to Washington. [REDACTED] 25X1

Western Europe

Indigenous terrorist groups in the region are no longer as active as they were at the beginning of the decade, but the region's leftwing and anarchistic groups remain a significant threat to US personnel and property. In addition, Western Europe continues to be the site of Middle-Eastern terrorist activities.

- o The Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (LARF) has been responsible for sporadic attacks on US and Israeli diplomats in **France** and **Italy** since 1981, including the attempted assassination of the US Consul in Strasbourg, France in March of this year.
- o The 27 September sentencing of **Turkish** terrorists belonging to the Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Unit (MLAPU), a group responsible for assassinating several Americans during the chaotic days prior to the September 1980 coup in Turkey, could provoke a terrorist attack against US servicemen and property.

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- o The leftist **Greek** terrorist organization 17 November claimed responsibility for the assassination of US Navy Captain Tsantes in late 1983 and the shooting this year of a JUSMAGG military courier. In late September 1984, we received information that the group had targeted the political counselor at the US Embassy for assassination later this year. Reportedly the Embassy has yet to install physical barriers because of concern that it must not appear as a fortress combined with a hesitancy to offend the Greek government.
- o **France's** leftist group, Direct Action (AD) has an anti-Jewish, anti-Israeli stance which could conceivably lead to attacks on US officials or buildings. [redacted] Direct Action stole 800 kilograms of TNT from a Belgian quarry in June, and has threatened to attack "symbols of Western Imperialism" by placing five car bombs around Paris. US diplomatic and military facilities would be likely targets.
- o **West German** counterterrorist operations have reduced the leftist Red Army Faction's (RAF) effectiveness. Specifically, their July 1984 capture of RAF personnel and documents may have prevented the staging of attacks against US and NATO targets including the US Army airfield in Karlsruhe, Dolan Caserne in Schwaebisch, the caserne and housing area at Bad Toelz, the Campbell Caserne in Oberammergau, and about 30 locations along the NATO pipeline. The RAF's surprising ability to recruit new members despite West German police successes however, makes it a continuing threat to US interests.
- o Red Brigades' (BR) documents recently recovered by **Italian** police indicate a continuing interest in NATO installations as well as in domestic political and military targets. There are indications that the BR has improved internal security practices, which could nullify Italian terrorist warning capabilities. Key members remain at large while recent reforms in the preventive detention system could allow the release of some 300 accused terrorist from prison, including several suspected of being involved in the Aldo Moro kidnapping and murder.
- o **Spain's** First of October Anti-fascist Resistance Group (GRAPO) this summer embarked on a bombing campaign that included the General Motors showroom in Aviles, Spain. The group is known to have gathered data on the US military residence connected with the Torrejon base, but its capability to conduct an attack is minimal.
- o While the credibility of much of the information is questionable, [redacted] Libyan and Iranian

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plans attacking US diplomatic and military personnel in
Western Europe

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the Abu Nidal may also be
implicated in prospective attacks.

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ASALA, the left-wing Armenian group,
particularly active in France, may have negotiated with
Iran to attack US targets in return for the release of
imprisoned members.

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Asia

Although there is currently no evidence of any ongoing
terrorist plots targeting US personnel or facilities in Asia, the
history of terrorist attacks in the region suggest that American
interests in some countries will remain at varying levels of
risk.

- o Last December, **Pakistan's** Al-Zulfikar members were
apprehended while planning to kill the US Consul General
in Lahore. Members of another Al-Zulfikar cell were
arrested in Vienna last summer after planning to seize
American hostages there and in Rome.
- o Within **Sri Lanka**, Tamil terrorist groups represent an
increasing threat to US personnel and facilities. Since
May, an American USAID couple has been kidnaped, the
hotel housing the Israeli Interests Section has been
bombed, and the main USAID office was the object of a
planned bombing.
- o In **Bangladesh**, a new threat could grow out of an
"Islamic Jihad Organization" with reported ties to both
Libya and Iran. The group has reportedly stated its
intention to attack "un-Islamic" Western targets,
beginning later this year.
- o **Japan's** left-wing radical group Chukaku-ha (Nucleus
Faction) conducted a series of minor firebombings
against lightly-guarded US facilities last summer, and
called off a planned attack on the US Embassy in the
fall of 1983.
Chukaku-ha reportedly has planned to attack an
unspecified embassy soon.
- o Firebombings also characterize the threat to US
installations in **South Korea**, where three American

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cultural facilities have been attacked since 1982. South Korean dissidents are thought to have been responsible for the bombings, which killed or injured several South Koreans.

- o In the **Philippines**, anti-Marcos violence by the Communist New People's Army could affect US interests with little or no warning. The last attack against American servicemen was in 1971, but the United States remains a high-visibility target because of its many military and diplomatic installations.

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Africa

The only serious terrorist threat to US personnel and facilities in Africa is likely to come from hostile Libyan-sponsored groups in countries that stretch south and east from Libya itself.

- o The French troop withdrawal from **Chad** will place US facilities at greater risk from Libyan-backed insurgents. In addition, Libyan-sponsored terrorists arrested in Chad earlier this year said the US Embassy was on their target list.
- o In **Sudan**, Libyan sponsored rebels in the south probably represent the greatest threat to US facilities. Sudanese authorities have uncovered at least two plots this year to bomb the US Embassy as part of schemes to overthrow President Nimeiri.
- o The large Libyan infrastructure in **Ethiopia** allows for attacks on American diplomats with little or no warning. A house in Addis Ababa occupied by Libyans who were building a bomb, blew up on 11 May, just after the resolution of the siege of the Peoples' Bureau in London.
- o In **Somalia**, an Ethiopian-sponsored threat to US facilities in the north, including the US Navy installation at Berbera, has been reported. Zairean exiles operating out of neighboring states are receiving increased support from Libya and could attack US facilities.

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Elsewhere in Africa, the threats are more difficult to assess. Small pockets of Islamic fundamentalists throughout Africa--for example in northern Nigeria--could threaten US

interests, and we would have little or no warning of attack from such a quarter. These groups, however, are closely watched by host governments, which view them as threats to regime stability. In other African countries, the combination of inadequate security and endemic political violence--such as in Uganda--could also affect official and nonofficial US personnel at any time.

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